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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000621

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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
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SUBJECT: SUDAN - LOCAL AND NATIONAL NGO HARASSMENT

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Classified By: DCM Roberto Powers, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) While acts of violence and intimidation of international humanitarian organizations and staff are well documented, particularly in Darfur, the harassment of national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has received comparatively limited attention. Activities funded by USAID and other international organizations related to support for the implementation of the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), and the October 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) have been repeatedly targeted for harassment. USAID notes a trend of Sudanese government efforts to curtail these and other advocacy activities, especially when youth are involved. This cable reviews incidents of national NGO maltreatment from December 2006 to February 2007. End summary.

NGO Government Outreach Efforts Reap Limited Returns

¶2. (C) Conscious of the sensitivities involved in peace process education programming, USAID partners undertake extensive planning and outreach efforts to inform and engage Sudanese government officials, including arranging Government of National Unity (GNU) Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) approval for activities and in some instances inviting HAC officials to attend trainings and workshops. Despite such efforts, HAC and Sudanese government officials frequently harass organizers and disrupt or delay activities, particularly when programming involves youth or is focused on human rights or the peace agreements.

Harassment of Peace Process Information Programs

¶3. (C) Between December 2006 and March 2007, USAID has supported ongoing activities with 27 national and local NGOs

in Darfur and northern Sudan to implement programs designed to disseminate the basic tenets of recent peace agreements and to promote human rights and other advocacy initiatives. NGO activities include human rights awareness promotion, legal aid, violence against women advocacy campaigns, professional skills development trainings, civic education, protection, and psychosocial support programs for conflict survivors. Programs are meant to increase awareness, facilitate dialogue, and empower communities, including women, internally displaced persons (IDPs), lawyers, pastoralists, and students to actively engage in shaping the future of a post-conflict Sudan.

¶4. (C) Like their international counterparts, national and local NGOs in Darfur have suffered from arrest, detention, and in several cases physical assault. NGOs in Khartoum and in the east have also been targeted for harassment and intimidation by Sudanese government officials. The select examples below illustrate common responses by the Sudanese government to local Sudanese organization advocacy initiatives supported through USAID and other international donors.

DARFUR: DECEMBER 2006) FEBRUARY 2007

a) December 3, 2006: In South Darfur, a USAID grantee implementing a violence against women and youth advocacy campaign was questioned about his activities in the camp by Sudanese government officials at a checkpoint on the way to the camp. He was subsequently detained, beaten, and verbally abused for one hour.

b) December 17, 2006: In North Darfur, a USAID-funded national NGO Deputy Director was accused of 'clandestine activities' by Sudanese government officials while attempting to organize human rights awareness activities in collaboration with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). On December 23 and 24, the Deputy Director was further

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interrogated. During the interrogation, Sudanese government officials were quoted as saying "UNMIS is our enemy." The NGO offices were allowed to reopen on January 15.

c) December 24, 2006: In South Darfur, a USAID grantee was kicked, whipped, and beaten after being detained by Sudanese government officials for his involvement in a UN Development Program-funded rule of law program. The punishment was allegedly for training IDPs on legal and human rights issues. The grantee's promotional material and professional papers were confiscated and he was accused by Sudanese government officials of "mobilizing IDPs against the state."

NORTHERN AND EASTERN SUDAN: FEBRUARY 2007

d) February 12, 2007: In Kassala State, the HAC office of 'Local NGO Security' interrogated a local USAID grantee working on human rights activities and stated that there are "too many outreach programs and not enough physical development." The grantee was also lectured on the need to work closely with local government officials "or it will appear you have something to hide" and repeatedly questioned for additional information on "foreign sources of funding" in the area.

e) February 12, 2007: In Kassala State, a USAID grantee had its permit revoked by HAC after only one of four planned ESPA dialogue workshops. Originally, HAC requested that these activities be moved to another location, allegedly due to Beja militia activity in the area. However, even after the workshops were relocated, HAC rescinded approval of the activity.

f) February 14, 2007: In a Khartoum neighborhood, a CPA tenet education program for IDPs from conflict areas experienced significant delays due to harassment from

Sudanese government officials. The grantee was informed that it did not have authorization to disseminate the CPA. On February 24, following protracted consultation with Sudanese government security officials, the grantee was permitted to resume activities.

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